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Review of *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Popular Music Policy*

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POPULAR MUSIC POLICY IN A TURBULENT TIME

At the end of April 2025, four Canadian artists—PARTYNEXTDOOR, Drake, Tate McRae, and The Weeknd—were near the top of the *Billboard* 200 chart, having found massive commercial success and generated billions of streams on music platforms during their careers. Ultimately, their popularity was not surprising, given the long history of Canadian artists finding international attention that surpasses what one might expect with the country's modest population of just over 40 million people. But what is unique about this situation is that music circulating via streaming platforms circumvents a Canadian policy framework that has been in place for radio broadcasting in the country since 1971. Canadian content regulations for radio have required the airplay of Canadian artists and have instructed commercial radio broadcasters to divert some of their profits to the development of music in Canada. However, the very question of how, or whether, to regulate streaming platforms and online music has recently become a pressing issue in the country. A new piece of legislation being considered by Parliament, the Online Streaming Act (Bill C-11), aims to fold the regulation of streaming platforms into the existing policy framework that encourages the showcasing of Canadian culture and to update that framework for the streaming media era.

The Online Streaming Act is part of a larger trajectory of national and international political events that have put policymaking for popular music front and center in Canada's national attention. With the election of Donald Trump for a second term as the US president, ideas about cultural protectionism in Canada have become a frequent subject of news headlines, with citizens and government officials rethinking Canada's dependence on the United States and the larger power dynamics that surround policies and regulations for trade, tariffs, and domestic manufacturing and production. A recent wave of support for Canadian goods and culture has even led Prime Minister Mark Carney to announce plans to double the budget of the country's public broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), and music industry organizations such as the Canadian Independent Music Association recently decided not to send its artists to South by Southwest (SXSW Music), the prominent American music showcase and festival.

What this opening anecdote tells us is that the circulation of popular music is influenced by a variety of interrelated and overlapping factors, many of which are determined by government policy and interventions. Recent events across the world have thrust both new and established policy frameworks into the public spotlight, as governments (at all levels, from municipalities to nations), musicians, music fans, and venue operators reconsider the production, distribution, performance, and sustainability of popular music in the twenty-first century. At the turn of the decade in 2020, the world was dramatically altered by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which, among other drastic and heartbreaking consequences, led to the illness or death of many musicians, catastrophically stalled the live music industry, and resulted in the closure of many live music venues. In a number of cases, governments at various levels attempted to actively moderate the economic ill effects of

the pandemic by offering grants or other kinds of funds to music workers, although the effectiveness of many of these initiatives over the long run has been questionable. In a post-Brexit context, music industry representatives have been working to find solutions to significant barriers for touring musicians in the European Union and the UK. One 2023 study found that, since Brexit, nearly half of all working musicians and music industry employees had found less work in the EU, and over a quarter of those surveyed had no work at all (Healy 2024). In sum, the overall health and well-being of music ecosystems around the world is intimately affected by policy and regulation, whether or not those policies are directly related to music.

In *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Popular Music Policy* (2022), an impressive range of case studies charts the interconnections between policymaking at various levels and popular music. The book provides examples of popular music policy from around the world, though most of the book's case studies come from Western countries. As the handbook's editor, media and communications scholar Shane Homan, suggests in his introductory chapter, "Situating Popular Music Policy," the collection serves to open up a discussion of "the gradual incursion of popular music within the wider machinery of the state" (2). The study of popular music also serves as an ideal perspective for exploring the influence of policy on culture, due to its interdisciplinary nature as well as music's intrinsic and instrumental values (Behr 2015). For example, policy can inspire and support music that is made at the margins of a culture, through a system of grants for music with artistic merit or by envisioning popular music as a driving force for economic activity, as found in a range of "music city" initiatives, where music is treated as a vehicle for enhancing tourism in a given location. As Homan explains, "Although possessing an uneven track record, urban regeneration strategies [that use the music city strategy] can also be classified as social amelioration strategies: popular music playing its part to smooth away the debilitating effects of unemployment, civic decay and general perceptions of poor 'liveability' in certain towns and cities" (12–13). Homan's introduction provides a helpful explanation of the concept of popular music policy, defining it as policy that "constitutes the goals, systems, management and regulation attached to popular music activity" (7). And the handbook's range of contributions effectively unpacks this definition, highlighting the diverse ways that policy shapes music, from the local to the global.

THE BLOOMSBURY HANDBOOK OF POPULAR MUSIC POLICY

This handbook includes twenty chapters and features thirty contributing authors. Chapters are grouped into four sections: "Policy Contexts," "Policy Sectors," "National Frameworks," and "Contemporary Debates." Contributors to the handbook are predominantly academics and at various stages in their academic careers, from PhD students to full professors, though experts from the policy world are included as well. For example, chapter 4, "Property or Status? Music and Musicians under Copyright," is authored by Thomas Dillon, a legal counsellor at the World Intellectual Property Organization, and chapter 14, "More Than Dots on Maps: Locating Live Venues in the German Music Policy Framework," features contributions by Heiko Rühl, the project manager of *Clubstudie*, a project of Initiative Musik, led by the German government and industry, that surveyed live music venues in the country.

As one reads through the handbook, the chapters flow logically from those that address broad topics and introduce key definitions to those with a more specific focus, including some that examine a particular national context and others that discuss a theme or issue in music that is informed by policy, such as the datafication of music and Spotify (ch. 18). In the book, there is a welcome balance of global frameworks and national case studies. For example, the introduction and first section, "Policy Contexts," familiarizes readers with the realm of large-scale, instrumental music policy, such as the power and politics involved in policymaking or the history of copyright. In Dillon's chapter, the reader learns about the prehistory of copyright law, as it developed in England and France in the seventeenth century. The chapter provides an overview of key developments in copyright

law as it applies to music and argues that the "balance of power between copyright owners and the developers of technology has shifted strongly in the favour of the latter" (67). As one reads further into the handbook, specific policy sectors are featured, like broadcasting and the live music industry, and these chapters are typically paired with a set of examples tied to a specific national context. Chapter 8, by media and music scholar J. Mark Percival, explores broadcasting sector policy, comparing the situation in the UK, where government and industry officials have long felt that a popular music broadcasting policy was not needed, with that in France, where a robust framework has been put into place to respond to specific needs. In chapter 9, the focus moves to live music infrastructure. Here, popular music studies scholar Adam Behr considers a range of sites where music is performed, from large-scale, arena projects to smaller, grassroots venues. Like other chapters, the national context for this study is the UK, where all arena venues, aside from the one in Newcastle, "were built with considerable input from public money" (138).

Key strengths of the handbook include the passages where the authors use historical context and helpful statistics to support their case studies. In chapter 15, popular music scholars Luke Thomas and Paul Carr detail Welsh policymaking for popular music between 1999 and 2020, and their discussion of the ways the music policy framework in Wales has shifted across decades is insightful. The chapter describes the terms of various Welsh governments and their policies, indicating how music has been influenced by policy in Wales over the years. Another strength of the handbook can be found in chapters that emphasize the human element in music policymaking. The year of fieldwork that sociologist Qian Wang conducted in Chengdu, China, enriches his chapter (ch. 12) on national and local music policy, and the piece also uses helpful figures to illustrate the relationship between China's GDP and the rate of growth in its music market, as well as the value of goods and services produced by music-related industries. Setting these statistics into context, the chapter draws "on information and opinions from interviewees to discuss how music policies vary from the national level to the local level within the administrative system and influence cultural practices" (181). Wang also echoes a key point made by Homan in the introduction about the ways that arts ministries have supported high culture and, at times, steered people away from popular culture, concluding, "Regardless of political systems and social environments in China or elsewhere, policy always reflects policymakers' ideologies and will" (182). Illustrating the point, Wang argues that "officials want to reach the goal of being labelled the 'international capital of music,' but they do not even think about popular music when a decision is related to politics.… Chengdu rock music has been sacrificed in silence" (192). In this way, the chapter also connects with politics and media scholar John Street's piece in the "Policy Contexts" section (ch. 2), which raises the question of how governments make political choices in music policy. This work illustrates why it is crucial to ask questions about the ways policies are developed, what type of music or artist becomes the focus of policy priorities, and what sounds are left behind.

On a similar note, Chapter 17, by popular music and media scholars Sam de Boise, Maura Edmond, and Catherine Strong, explores the pressing issue of gender equality in popular music industries, emphasizing the role of policy in shaping the broader music ecosystem and influencing who can participate in music-making and on what terms. In so doing, this chapter unveils the failure of policy to address pressing contemporary concerns. Using Sweden, the UK, and Australia as examples, the authors consider how policy approaches have attempted to address the issue of gender equality in popular music industries and to what extent they have succeeded. The case studies illustrate an increase in policymakers' engagement with the issue of women's participation in music but argue that this engagement is not always reflected in, or translated into, useful policy outcomes. In this context, the scholars conclude, "there are limits to the effectiveness of policy caught up too closely with neoliberal ideologies that either only focus on music's relationship to the market or attempt to deflect the responsibility for finding solutions on to individual women" (283).

As accurately explained by the authors of "More Than Dots on Maps" (Niklas Blömeke, Jan Üblacker, Johannes Krause, Heiko Rühl, and Katharina Huseljić), "Music policy is in a constant process of iteration between policymakers from a wide range of sectors" (217). As a result, one needs to have a certain amount of

past experience to feel comfortable operating in the policymaking space (Freedman 2006). This can be a major problem, since few musicians have this kind of experience and their voices are rarely heard in government. Unfortunately, the perspective of working musicians could have been more pronounced in this handbook. That said, readers will find that this collection gives a solid introduction to the pressing issues and challenges of popular music policy; in so doing it will inspire further work in this topic, as well as collaborations between working musicians and researchers. The handbook makes a case for including the topic of policy in popular music studies and describes the need for reflexive, observational, and ethnographic studies of the way that popular music policies are made and who the workers are in these spaces. Future work on popular music policy should be inspired by the material realities faced by working musicians (as many of the chapters in this collection are), and researchers should also examine the working culture of policymakers. Returning to the question that Street raised, future studies should thus ask: Who or what are the agents of popular music policy, and who are the individuals responsible for specific acts of policymaking? What sort of work do they do and under what conditions do they do it? How do they fit within the context of existing government and industry structures, hierarchies, priorities, and personnel?

So far, this review has noted the wide scope of this handbook and has gestured to a number of national case studies and examples, which take the reader into the world of popular music policymaking. Shifting to particulars, three key topics suggest the comprehensive range of chapters included in this collection: the place of nation-states in an increasingly global system of music circulation and listening; the significance of popular music policy at a time of rapid technological change; and the role of regulation in supporting music communities, which face rising corporate power and industry concentration. These topics are increasingly important in music studies today and must be addressed with policy in mind. *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Popular Music Policy* is a much-needed resource for understanding popular music in the twenty-first century.

POPULAR MUSIC POLICY IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Across the range of policies that shape popular music, some operate in similar ways in differing national contexts. In many countries, for example, copyright laws typically aim to balance the rights of creators and the interests of users, though the ways copyright is applied vary from nation to nation. However, other kinds of policies are unique to each national context. A major theme that runs throughout *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Popular Music Policy* is the way that national policies have been shaped by the emergence of streaming music platforms, which operate in a wide range of countries and even dominate the music industries in certain locales. Tied to this is the increasing power and influence of a handful of global tech companies and record labels. Media and popular music scholars Shuwen Qu, David Hesmondhalgh, and Jian Xiao explain that over 62 percent of global revenues from recorded music are generated from music streaming platforms (2023, 699–700). This technological landscape poses new questions about the control artists have over music rights and the pathways open to musicians as they navigate their careers. As well, the growth in streaming platforms urges a consideration of policies that are instrumental in setting the terms for how artists are financially compensated, or not. Drawing on the work of José van Dijck and his colleagues (2018), digital media scholars Jing Zeng and D. Bondy Valdovinos Kaye argue in a 2022 article that the fact that so much culture, including music, is "increasingly configured into a platformed global ecosystem" requires scholars to understand the "vast political and societal impacts" of platform governance (80). Zeng and Kaye's study explores the specifics of TikTok and its unique governance challenges, which include a young user demographic, the centrality of the visual, and a virality-centric platform logic (2022, 80). This work shows that to understand new modes of engaging with and consuming music in a global context, we must keep in focus the ways that policy frameworks and governance challenges are connected to the experience of music today.

The range of national contexts covered by *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Popular Music Policy* speaks well to this shifting and significant area of study. For example, the rise of K-pop has been a noteworthy story in the world of popular music over the past decade. In chapter 10, ethnomusicologist Soojin Kim connects the success of K-pop groups like BTS to the actions of the South Korean government, which created promotional materials for tourism that featured their music and saw politicians formally and publicly acknowledging the success of the group. The government's response to K-pop's success reflects a shift in cultural policy from traditional and folk music to popular music, which is now tied to "national prestige and pride" (152). Part of the government's response has been to help drive the use of digital technology in the K-pop scene. Virtual concerts have been produced by government-sponsored agencies in collaboration with major entertainment companies, and such initiatives illustrate the South Korean government's "ambition to make the nation a world leader in technology as well as an important component of the culture industry" (160). In this example, the use of digital technologies has helped K-pop reach fans across the world through accessible virtual concerts, and government priorities within the realm of cultural policy have helped to achieve this. Kim's perspective here is interesting, given earlier writings on the rise of K-pop, which focused on the Americanization of the sounds and styles coming out of South Korea. In 2014, global media researchers Dal Yong Jin and Woongjae Ryoo investigated the rapid growth of English lyrics in K-pop and posed questions about whether this "hybridity has generated new creative cultures, ones which are free from Western dominance, or whether this trend eventually oppresses local music and [its] soundscape" (114). These questions are framed within "the unfolding logic of globalization," and they set the stage for the sorts of government interventions in K-pop, and government's concern with this music's place on the global stage, charted by Kim.

A focus on the national context for music policymaking also highlights sharp power dynamics in the culture industries internal to a given country. To return to this essay's opening anecdote, policies and regulations for, and of, music in Canada are largely motivated by cultural protectionism and a wariness about allowing the much more dominant American culture industries to exert too much influence in the country. An often-cited policy for supporting the Canadian music industries is the aforementioned Canadian content regulations. In this context, popular culture scholar Scott Henderson (2008) notes that these policies "have been successful in constructing an emerging Canadian popular music industry" and allowing "a viable music infrastructure to form" (314). Beyond these regulations, however, a larger context of government policies and national economies has been instrumental in developing domestic music industries in Canada, including the "decidedly un-rock and roll elements of taxes and tariffs on imported goods," which were instrumental in the construction of record pressing plants in Canada (Fauteux, Sutherland, and Taylor 2020, 447). Music and policy scholar Richard Sutherland's chapter in the handbook (ch. 11) outlines this history of policy and protectionism. Here, he notes, "Anxiety over the potential loss of cultural sovereignty implied by this state of affairs [the dominance of the American culture industries] has formed the underlying rationale for much of Canada's cultural policy generally for nearly a century" (164). Sutherland discusses the contemporary context as well, in which "[g]overnment policies continue to aim for the protection of Canadian artists, increasingly within the outwardly directed frame of trade, rather than the protectionist mindset within which they emerged" (164). Sutherland's gesture to frame trade in this way pairs well with the chapter on music exports (ch. 7) by Homan, which focuses on the way music is exchanged between nations, namely through the live music showcases that take artists abroad. This is another significant chapter in the handbook's treatment of the ways in which national contexts are framed by global trends, as trading blocs between nations have significantly determined where and how music circulates, and this informs the ongoing dominance of North American artists at the top of global charts.

Finally, it is worth noting that policies by regional governments within nation-states can also serve to bolster music cultures, and in some cases, regional policies have taken on a more prominent role in popular music, while federal policies have receded. The chapter by music industry scholar and musician Sarah Taylor and Homan (ch. 13) uses the example of Indigenous music and education policies in Australia to demonstrate this.

Nevertheless, the authors also show how federal policies have been central to disseminating Indigenous popular music. Given the sheer geographical size of Australia, federal influence has been particularly important here, as has the history of colonization in the country (199, 205). From federal levels down to regions and municipalities, popular music policy has sought to reduce the uneven power dynamics between Indigenous people and settlers, and in some situations it has made a vital contribution to this important task.

POPULAR MUSIC POLICY AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

Policy for music is often slow to catch up with major shifts in listening practices and new uses of media and technologies. Dillon's chapter shows how the influence of the internet on the entertainment sector of the economy has once again made copyright highly relevant as a social and political issue (50). At the same time, Dillon adds, "Although copyright is much argued over today.…[t]he poles of the debate have not shifted greatly since the British Royal Commission [on Copyright] of 1878" (51). Nevertheless, the large companies behind new streaming platforms and music listening devices, like smartphones, have grown in power and influence, and this has had a significant impact on policymaking. In chapter 3, "The Presence and Absence of Policy in the Digital Music Industries," music industries scholar Daniel Nordgård argues, "Since the turn of the millennium, the giants of the tech sector have exercised political pressure to position themselves [with regard to legal frameworks], often conflicting with the interests and agendas of the traditional music industries" (34). For example, the North American satellite radio company SiriusXM has been influential in negotiations with the US Copyright Review Board to keep its royalty rate payments as low as possible. Further, the company has worked to bypass the rights organization SoundExchange by establishing direct licenses with labels (Fauteux 2025, 146). Companies across the music and tech industries, including Amazon, Apple, Google, and Spotify, have banded together to form the Digital Media Association (DiMA). This collection of audio streaming companies advocates in policy circles for the economic interests of its members. In Canada, DiMA has used its collective power and influence to depict the aforementioned Bill C-11 as a "streaming tax," one that is tied to the country's Liberal party and then prime minister Justin Trudeau. DiMA's "Scrap the Streaming Tax" advertising campaign targets everyday users and seeks to create fears about rising costs, blaming policymakers for putative price increases and obscuring the fact that costs related to Canadian Content Development could be paid out by company profits, rather than by subscribers.

Technological change and its financial consequences—such as the move to allocate more resources and attention to streaming services, rather than traditional media—has also led to new modes of government support and intervention. As John Street shows in chapter 2, popular music is always political, in that it involves the allocation of scarce resources and, in many cases, increasingly scarcer resources. Street adds, "Who benefits and who loses in the results of these decisions can be attributed to the distribution of power" (21). To return to the example of broadcasting and government support for public media, a shift in technology and resources has often meant that policies and mandates become geared toward more widely circulating music, which is often referred to as "content," as opposed to investing in the production of music or other cultural products. At the turn of the twenty-first century, a common shift in language from "public broadcasting" to "public service media" began to account for the variety of media forms that a public media outlet was now responsible for (Bardoel and Lowe 2007, 9, 17). Today, a number of public media institutions with government support, including the BBC in the UK, the ABC in Australia, NPR in the US, RTE in Ireland, and the CBC in Canada, have faced a new reality of reduced resources in the face of an increasing emphasis on digital delivery.

Related to these shifts, and given the increasing sway of tech companies in policymaking, the various kinds of value that are ascribed to popular music have become implicated in the allocation of resources and policy

priorities and, as Nordgård's chapter in the book explains, tech companies have lobbied governments extensively to shift media policy in their favor. In *Making Value* (2024), ethnomusicologist Timothy D. Taylor argues that traditional media technologies, like radio, remain relevant to the contemporary context of music's exchange, circulation, and value, despite the changes brought forth by digital technologies and the internet. He writes that "people mostly use technologies to do what they have always done, including making music, listening to music, sharing music, sharing ideas about music, recommending artists, songs, genres, recordings, and much more" (189). However, digital technologies have amplified and sped up these processes. These points echo culture and creative industries scholars Paul Long, Zelmarie Cantillon, and Sarah Baker's chapter 5 in the handbook on popular music heritage and policy, which suggests that "the innovation of the digitalization of music and the availability of new material have galvanized the re-presentation of old material across platforms such as Spotify, iTunes/Apple Music or YouTube" (78). Music from the past, then, circulates and recirculates, and becomes valued and appreciated by listeners as they hear it in the contemporary moment. The authors add that "[w]ith the appearance of meta archives, these platforms afford the impression of an intensified presence before us of the global and historical wealth of recordings and new modes of access to them" (78).

This notion of old music becoming relevant and current once again is, of course, at odds with narratives of the devaluation of music in the streaming era. Major pop artists like Taylor Swift have commented that Spotify does not value music as it should, and from 2014 to 2017, she pulled her entire music catalog, except for one song, from the platform for this reason. Music streaming services are both criticized for their low per-stream payouts to artists and celebrated for increasing listeners' access to music, and this is one way that the tension between the valuing and devaluing of music in the digital age plays out. In any case, and for the purpose of this review, the question becomes: How can policy intervene or interrupt the power and control that tech companies wield when it comes to setting the terms for the circulation of music in the streaming media era? In chapter 16, economist Michael Waterson focuses on the ticketing industry and its reliance on the internet to mediate systems of exchange between ticketing companies and music fans (258). A major news story in recent years has been efforts to regulate the ticketing industry or, at least, break up the monopoly that Live Nation's Ticketmaster enjoys today. In April 2025, the American Economic Liberties Project and the Break Up Ticketmaster Coalition sent a letter to the Justice Department to voice support for the continuation of its lawsuit against Live Nation. The letter "stresses the urgency of the case, detailing the ways in which Live Nation allegedly continues to squeeze fans, artists and independent venues while reporting record revenue and concert profits" (Cho 2025, para. 4). This lawsuit exemplifies the growing battle between, on the one hand, corporate power, and, on the other, the vibrancy and sustainability of music ecosystems in America, and other nations as well.

Another example of the intertwined relationship between policymaking and the values that are given to music comes in the handbook's fourteenth chapter, which discusses the German national context. Here, the Bundestag (federal parliament) approved a motion in May 2021 to modify the German federal zoning ordinance and grant music clubs the same cultural status as opera houses and theatres. The authors of this chapter argue that this "groundbreaking" decision "urges the federal government to present a legislative proposal that accepts music clubs and venues as integral elements in culture" (229). In sum, throughout a number of chapters in the handbook, there is an ongoing examination of the idea of musical value and how it is shaped and determined by policy frameworks. As Long, Cantillon, and Baker explain in chapter 5, the growing attention to heritage in popular music fields is "an amplification of the idea that the value of popular music lies not only in its economic promise but is expressed also in the ways in which it has accrued an abiding cultural worth for individuals and communities…" (74). If worth, or value, can be tied to communities, just as it can to economic value, policy has a role to play in supporting the connections among music, culture, and community.

REGULATION, CORPORATE CONTROL, AND MUSIC COMMUNITIES

To return to the example of Bill C-11 in Canada, which opened this review essay, the role of policymaking can be to aspire to set the terms by which a music ecosystem operates and support independent and up-and-coming artists. The coordination between global record labels and major corporate music streaming platforms is one that results in a handful of artists achieving massive success, with some even reaching billionaire status. Taylor Swift is an obvious example, and her move to rerecord and retain the rights to her music has no doubt factored into her massive wealth. Swift reported a net worth of $1.1 billion in October 2023, according to *Forbes*, and she was the first musician to reach billionaire status strictly from songwriting and performing (Mercuri 2024). As of early 2025, other musician billionaires include Jay-Z, Rhianna, Beyoncé, Bono, Paul McCartney, Bruce Springsteen, and Madonna, though many of their fortunes come from extramusical revenues, such as brand partnerships or retail products other than CDs or streams.

Policy and public support for music can help to bolster music communities through grants and development initiatives that prioritize artists who are without radio airplay, prime positions on Spotify playlists, and preexisting success and fan support. Initiatives like Bill C-11 offer the potential to have the few massive multinational corporations within the tech-streaming music world contribute to the public funding of the arts. Around the time of the 2023 Juno Awards in Canada, the effect of the country's grant systems, which operate through government policy, was clearly evident in the public support of "diverse Canadian music heritage and the development of Canadian artists" (Fauteux, deWaard, and Selman 2023, para. 8). Across that year's Juno nominees, at least 85 artists had received a total of 433 grants from FACTOR (the Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent on Recordings). As part of Canadian content regulations for radio, financial contributions from private broadcasters flow to FACTOR. Bill C-11 seeks to have major corporate streaming music services do the same. The sheer number of artists receiving grants, as well as the high number of individual grants received by Juno-nominated performers, makes clear the importance of Canadian content policies for the development of music careers in Canada.

Public support of music communities, through policy, is crucial at a time when corporate power controls so much of the music industries. As Homan explains in the introduction to the handbook, "The real power of the global digital platforms is now 'hiding in plain sight,' with their ability to override local consumption platforms and local content mechanisms. This represents the messy landscape in which governments and industries must contend" (9). Across the handbook, a number of chapters make a strong argument for policymaking to play this role, and various examples showcase areas where policy has been effective and illustrate the ways it can significantly improve the lives of musicians and listeners.

One hopeful example comes from Street's chapter on rights, resources, and the cultural politics of music policy. Street explains how, in the UK, city developers were once able to build "luxurious dwellings" in the heart of urban centers, and the residents of these buildings were prioritized over music venues that had existed long before these new developments were constructed. To address issues of noise, music venues situated near these new residential developments were expected to invest in soundproofing. Due to the cost of these renovations, many small venues were thus forced to close. Of course, this is just one part of a larger problem of sustainability that smaller venues face, particularly in the period following the COVID-19 pandemic. However, legislation has shifted, so that developers became responsible for noise control, and this "established a particular view of what was in the 'public interest'—the retention of music venues" (27). Legislation, in this case, became a catalyst for determining how cities develop and how music venues are prioritized in the context of development or gentrification. If strong and supportive music communities and diverse forms of music infrastructure are to survive in our contemporary era, robust and effective policies are needed to meet the challenges of the day. This is not always easy, and as Homan details, governments have typically been "lagging legislatively behind commercial digital media and the consequences of a networked set of industries" (17). This handbook, then,

should serve to inspire popular music studies researchers and students to center the field of policymaking in their work, as it would help build a bridge between the ways music is studied and thought about in the academy and the ways it is produced and circulated in musical and cultural communities.

CONCLUSION

The interdisciplinary and ever-changing field of popular music studies has been intertwined with the world of policymaking for decades. The two inform each other in powerful ways, and it is impossible to think about the place of popular music in the world without thinking about trade, exports, music education, copyright, and related concerns. An influential 1991 special issue of the journal *Cultural Studies* makes this relationship entirely explicit. In the introduction to the issue, popular music studies scholar John Shepherd explained that it includes the proceedings of an international conference titled "The Music Industry in a Changing World" (1991, 251). Such a title could be given to a similar conference today in 2025, as this review essay has hopefully made clear. In 1991, pressing issues in the culture industries and the wider political climate included trade barriers between Canada and the US, the free trade legislation that was put into place between these countries in 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall, which occurred that same year, and concerns around the dominance of American culture industries (Shepherd 1991, 251); these contexts shaped the various contributions to this *Cultural Studies* special issue. Historian Robert Wright (1991), for example, discussed the idea of Canadian content and the recording industry in Canada; anthropology of music scholar Sara Cohen (1991) considered government arts and culture industries initiatives and popular music and urban regeneration projects in Liverpool; and cultural studies scholar Jody Berland (1991) covered the North American Free Trade Agreement and its influence on the Canadian music industry. Heading into the 1990s, policy was front and center in the world of popular music; it still is today, and the field of popular music studies must renew its focus on policy.

In *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Popular Music Policy*, readers will find studies that, in a wide range of ways, make the case for thinking through the ongoing significance of policymaking for the world of popular music. The volume will no doubt inspire music researchers to think about policy in meaningful ways and to integrate research on this topic into their own work. This review essay encourages readers of the handbook to think about the possibility of becoming an advocate for music cultures and music communities in policymaking. Researchers and writers have the ability to bring findings and arguments to people in power and to make the case for policies that consider the lives and careers of musicians and artists, though doing so is easier in some countries than in others. At times, musicians have directly advocated for their rights with policymakers. Smokey Robinson, for example, received press attention in 2018 for testifying before the US Senate Judiciary Committee during its hearing on the Music Modernization Act (Fabian 2018). But many musicians do not have the time, or feel comfortable, doing the same. Academics, researchers, and writers can help to bring these perspectives to agents of change at various levels of government. This handbook is a fantastic introduction to the world of policymaking, and it will no doubt inspire readers to advocate for more sustainable and vibrant music communities in their home cities, towns, and countries.

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